1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

importance, but treatment of that subject must be reserved for another time. The balance maintained in the Umbundu social system, which has already been noted,[1] together with woman's important position in the economic sphere, give to the women and girls a relatively satisfactory place in Umbundu society. It has also been noted that woman's sphere has suffered less disintegration than has man's. Although the girl may have somewhat less freedom than the boy, her personal prospects are more stable, and in the long run more satisfactory.

Adjustments between parents and children among the Ovimbundu are relatively satisfactory. The fact that there are no specific father–daughter or mother–son avoidances or taboos, beyond the general laws of incest which nearly all cultures maintain, indicates an absence of strain in these relationships. In our own society adult–child fixations, and particularly the parent–child fixations, with the consequent repressions, are very common and are held to be responsible, at least in part, for much trouble including difficulties of adjustment at pubescence.[2] In traditional Umbundu society such fixations occur very infrequently, if at all.[3] In this context we should be reminded of the following factors:

1. The early and continued close association of the child largely (although not exclusively) with the parent of the same sex.[4]
2. The association of the child with many (classificatory) 'fathers' and 'mothers' which may result in a partial transfer of affection.[2]
3. The absence of fondling, kissing, and other close bodily contact in display of affection.[5]

The picture in these respects is not unlike that of the Samoans given by Margaret Mead.[6] In some other respects it is quite different but it is similar in the apparent absence of a period of adolescent *Sturm und Drang*. What actual correlations there may be between parent–child fixations and a period of adolescent stress I do not know. The absence of any such period has been reported

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 43.

[2] Cf. Allport, op. cit., pp. 355 ff.

[3] The proverbial inability of a widow properly to rear a child (*vide supra*, p. 102) may indicate difficulties of this sort.

[4] *Vide supra*, p. 98.

[5] No display of affection whatever is congenial to the Ovimbundu, except to babies and between adolescent age-mates of the same sex.

[6] Op. cit., chap. x.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

from several primitive cultures,[1] and some experimental studies seem to indicate that it is less general in the United States than had previously been supposed.[2] It is recognized that in this country parent–child fixations have produced many pathological cases.[3] With the practical absence of such fixations among the Ovimbundu, no such group of pathological cases exists. This is a clear gain, but there is also probably a loss, in that there seems to be a corresponding scarcity of the more or less introverted idealistic persons, 'the tender-minded class described by William James'.[4]

Ovimbundu parents proverbially love their eldest child (*nuñulũ*) in a special way,[5] but there is not in their family situation as much invidious distinction as that which in ours often produces the domineering eldest child, the inadequate youngest, and others in the sequence with feelings of neglect or 'rejection'. The Umbundu family situation almost inevitably involves less sharpness of distinction, for although the eldest child may be loved in a special way he deals not only with his parents but with other relatives of their generation and with elder (classificatory) siblings and cross-cousins of his own generation. So, also, the last or youngest child of a sequence would hardly sense himself the youngest since there will almost certainly be younger (classificatory) siblings and cross-cousins toward whom he in turn will act as his elders acted toward him.[6] In a normal Umbundu family situation the problem of the 'only child', so acute in America, is almost inconceivable.

Some Ovimbundu, not only as children but also as younger siblings and as secondary wives, do suffer from feelings of neglect and rejection. I have not noted this from biographical or other direct evidence, except from observation of resentment on the part of younger siblings of fagging by their elders. Evidence exists, however, in the frequency of the Cinderella motif in Umbundu folk-tales. Many are the fables in which Little Hare (*Kandimba*), Little Tortoise (*Kambeu*), or Little Weasel (*Kavili*) gets the better of his stupid elders, represented by almost any and all of the larger

[1] Cf. Mead, loc. cit., Fortes, op. cit., p. 9.

[2] Gardner and Lois B. Murphy, *Experimental Social Psychology* (New York: Harpers, 1931), pp. 429–32.

[3] Allport, op. cit., p. 362.

[4] Quoted from Allport, op. cit., p. 362.

[5] Cf. the proverb: *Epungu liwa konendela; omõlã sole kunuñulũ*, '(Of) corn best the first fruits; (of) children (you) love the first born'.

[6] This seems to be the state of affairs quite generally in societies having a classificatory kinship system. Cf. M. Mead, op. cit., chaps. iii, iv.

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

157 538 593 animals.[1] Other tales with frankly human protagonists portray the same theme,[2] and there are a number of Umbundu adaptations and variations of such European versions of this theme as Cinderrella, Snow White, &c. In some tales, such as 'Kalitangi', the hero escaped as an infant from an agreement made by his mother before his birth with another expectant mother that they would both destroy their offspring. Does this indicate a resentment of, or a protest against, child-sacrifice in certain Umbundu rites? I mention this as one possible source for the feeling of neglect and 'rejection' which, however, does not seem to be as acute or as widespread as in our own society.[3] The exact situation could only be determined by careful and extensive investigation.

593 152 [643] Adjustments between siblings among the Ovimbundu on the whole are relatively satisfactory. Resentment on the part of the younger does sometimes occur as indicated above. Overt sibling conflict has also arisen quite frequently in the royal families because of disputes over the succession. Instances of this latter type of conflict may be found in narratives of the early missionaries,[4] in diaries of Silva Porto,[5] and in other early sources. Conflict from jealousy arising out of the parent–child relationship, however, seems to be relatively rare. In a kinship society regulated by the hierarchy of age, jealousy between siblings does not quite fit into the picture. The two most common terms for jealousy over personal relations refer strictly to sexual jealousy: *esepa*, woman's jealousy; and *ukuelume*, jealousy on the part of a man. The other terms are somewhat more applicable but they belong less to household affairs. The meaning of *onya* is jealousy and envy, while *ocipululu* is covetousness and so belongs to the economic sphere.

572 [554] Friendship, especially between age-mates or 'coevals', has played and continues to play an important role in Umbundu social adjustments. Such differences as social station, family, distance of habitation, and even diversity of language and culture are easily bridged by friendship. Many friendships were formed on trading

[1] Cf. *Journal of the American Folk-Lore Society*, 1922, vol. 35, nos. 1 and 18, pp. 116 f., 140 ff.

[2] The tale of *Ñaña la kota liaye* (Baby and his elder sister) referred to *supra*, p. 84.

[3] Investigations of the 'foster-child phantasy', feelings of neglect, 'rejection', &c., reported by Murphy, op. cit., p. 415 f.; and by Allport, op. cit., p. 364 f.

[4] *Missionary Herald*, 1888, p. 242 f.

[5] In *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 1885, 1886.